

Fighting 13th



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The 13th MEU(SOC) Newsletter

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13th MEU gives back during Hawaii port visit

By Cpl. Andy Hurt
Editor

ABOARD THE USS TARAWA
(July 25, 2005) – A group of 23 Marines and Sailors from the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) donated a portion of their liberty time during a recent stop in Hawaii, lending “a few good hands” to aid homeless shelters in the Honolulu metropolitan area.

The unit arrived at Naval Station Pearl Harbor on the island of Oahu for a port call and liberty during the early stages of a Western Pacific deployment.

Pulling into the port July 21, the Marines and Sailors of the MEU traded work uniforms for civilian attire. After a night of socializing and relaxing, the servicemembers reported to the quarterdeck of the USS TARAWA (LHA 1) for voluntary community service. Upon arrival to the Institute for Human Services in downtown Honolulu, the volunteers rolled up their sleeves and went to work scrubbing and disinfecting living areas within the shelter.

Evan Sabo-Quizon, a full-time IHS shelter employee, said that large volunteer groups, like the Marines from the 13th MEU are always appreciated.

“Anyone who volunteers to help is always a blessing,” Sabo said, “but we were really surprised to find out that all of you guys were coming.”

Sabo was also aware that the servicemembers were donating time normally set aside for sightseeing, and was impressed with the amount of dedication shown on their part.

“That’s really ‘solid’,” he said. “It shows that people actually care.”

After completing work at the first shelter in half the allotted time, the volunteers loaded vans and traveled across town to another IHS shelter designated for women, performing similar services with the same enthusiasm. Marines and Sailors were more than happy to work together for a needy cause, and each service member had different reasons for wanting to help.

According to Cpl. Nickolas Mosley, an administrative clerk with the 13th MEU(SOC) personnel office, “It’s a good way to spend your time, giving

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Photo by Cpl. Andy Hurt

Corporal Nickolas Mosley, an administrative clerk serving with the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), prepares to dip his scrubbing pad in disinfectant while volunteering for a July 22 community relations project in Honolulu during a unit port call. Mosley, an Oklahoma City native, said the event helped him relieve stress after a full week at sea aboard the USS TARAWA.

Inside this issue:

Chaplain Waldron offers a few solutions to coping with deployment loneliness.

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Giving a haircut on a rocking ship is no easy task, but one MEU Marine is committed to excellence.

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Loneliness on deployment: a road to self-discovery

By Navy Lt. Edward Waldron

Command Chaplain

Fighting 13th MEU

It never gets easier to leave family and loved ones. The pier was full of Sailors, Marines, girlfriends, boyfriends, spouses and yes, a sea of children. Each was saying goodbye in their own way, and then with a long hug and a kiss, off to the ship the Sailor or Marine went. Then with a long sigh, everyone watched as the Ship left the pier. There was one child that screamed out for their mom so loud that we could hear the child well out into the water. We all felt the longing heart of that child, because the child was voicing what was in our hearts. We all felt the tug on the heartstring of separation and loneliness.

Everyone knows loneliness. We can be in a crowd and still be lonely. Loneliness comes from the desire in everyone to share a significant part of our lives with someone else. Many events in life are meant to be shared and remembered together: a beautiful sunrise, a wonderful vista with a view, or just that moment of



thought or laugh. These become the shared memories that add to a relationship as God gives us years in our lives.

How do you deal with this separation? It

does make a difference in how the Marines and Sailors serve on this deployment and helps you to enjoy every moment in life. Here are just a few ideas:

Pray! God knows our needs and does a better job at getting some things done, even when we are present. Out here we need all the help we can get. Also, with God in our lives we are never truly alone.

Write often! Use both email and letters. There is nothing better than getting a letter from home. Share some of those experiences that you wish the other were there for.

Be active! A quiet house makes the

longing harder. Be involved with Key Volunteers, Church, or another group of people that care. If sleeping is a problem, keep going till you drop. Almost everyone on deployment is so busy, that sleep comes with great exhaustion and fewer worries.

Self-improvement! Do something that is hard to do with the significant other around. It will make the time more productive and adds meaning to the separation.

Celebrate! Plan reunions that make for great memories. Share those thoughts in your letters.

Save! Deployment can add some nice extra money to the family. Use some of it for the reunion, but also save for something significant that will help make the separation seem a little more worthwhile.

Separation is never easy, but with a little celebration and doing some worthwhile projects it can become time well spent.

Blessings,

Chaplain Edward Waldron

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back to people who don't have as much as you do." Mosley, one of many Marines serving his second Western Pacific deployment with the unit, visited Hawaii twice before, and was eager to act as a goodwill ambassador for the Marine Corps. "When we come here and do this community a service . . . it says a great deal about the Marine Corps and gives us a better name in the community."

The 22-year-old Oklahoma City native said that in addition to giving back to a worthy cause,

the event also helped restore his inner balance, which can become scrambled during a less-than-relaxing duration of time on ship.

"This really gives Marines a sense of accomplishment, and it helps me balance my stress from the ship," said Mosley, "I can actually move around and (talk) with people."

Major William N. Pigott, 13th MEU(SOC) Staff Judge Advocate, coordinated the community service event, and said both stops were a complete success, dubbing each volunteer "gung-ho," and calling the effort "extremely

dedicated and enthusiastic."

"The Marines and Sailors worked together and made a difference in the lives of men, women and families," said Pigott, adding, "Our command recognizes that volunteering is a rewarding team-building exercise that allows us to meet new people and make the world a better place."

The community service event in Hawaii is only one of several planned port call community relations events, and marked the beginning of a successful Western Pacific deployment.

The Fighting 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable)



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From the 13th MEU(SOC) Commanding Officer

Families and friends of the Fighting 13th,
After a successful port and liberty call in Hawaii, we are back to sailing the high seas of the Western Pacific.

The Marines and Sailors of the Fighting 13th have performed well during the first leg of our journey. Although each one of us left behind someone dear in San Diego, we stand together, focused on our mission, prepared and ready to respond rapidly when called upon.

Liberty in Hawaii was a time for unit-wide relaxation and recreation.

On the sun-soaked island of Oahu,

Marines and Sailors were able to stretch their legs and recharge their Southern California tans.

Some unit members also took the opportunity to give back to the community of Honolulu, and spent the morning of July 21 volunteering at two local homeless shelters.

Similar events are in the works for our future port calls.

As we set a course toward our next

Although each one of us left behind someone dear in San Diego, we stand together ...

their hearts for our safe return.

We cannot promise smooth sailing for the duration of our deployment, but a positive, strong connection with home is certain to carry us swiftly through rough seas.

Semper Fidelis,

Col. James K. LaVine

13th MEU(SOC) Hometown Heroes



This week's hometown hero is Navy Religious Personnel-3rd class Pasquale Troisi of south Philadelphia. Troisi, the assistant to the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit Command Element Chaplain, is known around the unit as someone who has a knack for lifting spirits during the daily routine aboard the USS Tarawa. "Troisi has boundless energy," said Lt. Edward Waldron, command Chaplain. "He's unbelievably proactive." Troisi came into the Navy with the hopes of one day becoming a Navy SEAL, and feels that this Western Pacific deployment with the 13th MEU(SOC) will help further prepare him for accomplishing his goal.

A message from the Key Volunteer Network

Dear Marines and Sailors of the 13th MEU:

Aloha! On behalf of the Key Volunteers, we want you to know that we are very proud of your dedication, commitment and loyalty to the MEU, the Marine Corps, and our country. We've recognized your hard work and efforts in making this deployment a safe and productive event for everyone involved.

The work-ups have ended and the journey has begun, for all of us. **Together**, we are strong!

All of us back home already miss you very much but are hopeful that together, we will unite at monthly events and become stronger individuals by supporting, listening and laughing with each other. Together, we can and will provide support to each other and all of you from across the globe.

We need your help! The spouses and friends of the 13th MEU will meet several times in the next few months. We ask that you encourage your family and friends to attend our events. We plan to take photos and create banners & letters to send to the ship to remind you we're missing you and thinking of you here at home.

Our events will provide fellowship and time for kids to play, socialize and have fun while the adults discuss current events, play games, and share concerns and memories.

May the waters be calm and your hearts content during this time of global support. We all will be thinking of you often, with much admiration and love. Please do take good care of each other while away and know that we are working together back home to help support the journey. May God bless and watch over the Marines and Sailors of the 13th MEU.

Command Element Family Info/Admin Notes

From the Sergeant Major, 13th MEU(SOC)

Sergeant Major David A. Deal, 13th MEU(SOC) Command Element sergeant major, would like to extend his congratulations to the NCO of the Quarter, Cpl. Frederic Lewis of Golf Company, BLT 2/1, and Marine of the Quarter, Lance Cpl. Luis Sanchez III, from MSSG-13.

Congratulations are also extended to those Marines within the unit who are being promoted this month, including a handful of meritorious promotions.

And a **special** note of thanks goes out to HM1 Christopher "Doc" Roganti, 13th MEU Command Element, and HM1 Donald Meredith, BLT 2/1, for their promotion selections to Chief Petty Officer.

Upcoming Family Event Hosted by KVN

Planning for the first family event while the Marines and Sailors of the 13th MEU are underway has been started.

On Saturday, Aug. 27, the Key Volunteers Network is scheduling a "Bright Star Bash" at the San Onofre Community Center.

From 3 to 5 p.m., spouses and children are invited to enjoy children's crafts, banner making and more.

For more information and directions, contact your Key Volunteer Coordinators at (949) 366-0514 or (760) 798-9074.

Tiger Cruise Info

The USS Tarawa will soon be requesting permission to host a "Tiger Cruise" on our

return trip from Pearl Harbor to San Diego. Our "Tigers" will meet the ship in Hawaii near the end of our deployment and accompany us on our return to homeport.

"Tiger Cruise" is a special guest cruise program where Sailors and Marines are permitted to embark friends and relatives. These guests are called "Tigers." This program provides the opportunity for our family and friends to see and participate in the daily shipboard routine. This promises to be a fantastic experience for everyone involved.

Each Sailor and Marine can invite two Tigers that meet the following criteria.

- Participants must be eight years of age or older.

- Spouses/girlfriends/boyfriends are not allowed to participate.

- All Tigers must be medically qualified.

- Foreign nationals may be invited, but special clearance is required.

The only expense will be the cost of the Tiger's meals while onboard TARAWA. Please note that the military cannot pay your Tiger's expenses to Hawaii for the Tiger Cruise, during the cruise, or, in the unlikely event that the cruise is cancelled, your Tiger's trip back home.

In October, we will distribute the "Tiger Sponsorship" form. Once this is turned in, your prospective Tiger will receive an email with several forms attached (Intent to Embark, Medical Questionnaire, and Physician's Approval). These forms will need

13th MEU Warrior Birthdays - August -

Capt. Michael Gaffney Jr. - August 6
S-3 Tactical Officer

Lance Cpl. Nicholas Robinson - August 8
S-3 Operations Clerk

Cpl. David Hassan - August 9
S-2 Arabic Linguist

Staff Sgt. Houston F. White Jr. - August 13
S-5 Public Affairs Chief

Col. James K. LaVine - August 18
13th MEU(SOC) Commanding Officer

Capt. Christopher Feilds - August 22
S-4 Embark Officer

Lance Cpl. Nathan Walters - August 22
S-2 Radio Battalion Det.

Pvt. Jessica Rivera - August 26
S-1 Radio Recon Team

Capt. Matthew Mielke - August 29
S-3 Information Officer

Maj. Robert Schwarz - August 29
S-3A Officer

to be faxed to CPG3 Tiger Cruise Coordinator in San Diego. The deadline will be six weeks prior to our arrival in Pearl Harbor. Once your Tiger is approved to participate, they can finalize any travel arrangements.

13th MEU(SOC) Deployment Mailing Addresses

Due to the on going Western Pacific deployment, official and personal mailing addresses

have been modified to according to operational conditions.

The official unit mailing address is as follows:
COMMANDING OFFICER
ATTN (SECTION)
13TH MEU
UNIT 42525
FPO AP 96610-2525

The personal mailing address is as follows:
GRADE/NAME/ USMC
13TH MEU (SECTION)
UNIT 42525
FPO AP 96610-2525

26th MEU HMM-162 'Golden Eagle' Marines arm squadron for success

By Capt. Will Klumpp
26th MEU(SOC)

ABOARD USS

KEARSARGE (July 18, 2005) — The arsenal of aircraft comprising the Aviation Combat Element of the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) provides an impressive array of capabilities ranging from troop transport to aerial surveillance. However, the ability of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-162 to strike targets with decisive force is largely attributable to the squadron's ordnance division, which sends each aircraft and pilot off with the tools needed to fight and win.

The 22 Marines in the ordnance division have been arming MEU aircraft with a variety of ordnance an several days a week since USS Kearsarge arrived in the Northern Arabian Gulf in May to support maritime security operations. The division has had the responsibility of arming each UH-1 Huey, AH-1W Cobra, CH-46E Sea Knight, CH-53E Super Stallion and AV-8B Harrier in the squadron.

The Marines have actually been arming these same aircraft for several months, but operations in the CENTCOM theater have seen a shift from using a mix of live and practice ordnance to a near exclusive line-up of live ammunition, bombs and missiles. This change reflects the MEU's engagement in operations supporting the Global War on Terror, and the job the ordnance specialists perform in support of "real-world" missions is one they take seriously.

"The Marines have been excited to load live ordnance, knowing that it is going to support the Marines on the deck. They take great pride in knowing that ordnance will come off the aircraft accurately when the time comes," said Capt. Graham E. Thomas, officer in charge of the ordnance division.

Ensuring that ordnance such as bombs and missiles are released accurately is a vital task of the division, but only one of many tasks the Marines are responsible for. The full list of responsibilities includes the storage, handling, assembly, disassembly, loading, down-loading, arming, de-arming and transportation of the ACE's full range of ordnance and weapons systems. Additionally, they must check ordnance release and control systems and conduct bomb rack safety checks on each mission-tasked aircraft. Due to the technical precision and safety requirements related to handling ordnance and arming aircraft, each Marine in the division is subject to scrutiny and advanced training prior to becoming part of any ordnance team. They undergo background checks, must pass explosive handling physicals and be eligible for a security clearance before being considered for further training. The Marines then begin a series of certification qualifications that, ideally, will have them progress from team member to team leader and then quality assurance officer (QASO) within the division. Team leaders have the responsibility of making sure



Photo Courtesy of HMM-162

A team from the ordnance division of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-162 (Reinforced), loads GBU-12 bombs on an AV-8B Harrier aboard USS Kearsarge.

each weapon is loaded and armed properly while the QASO ensures all is right with the aircraft once it is fully loaded and armed. The team leader works "hands-on" with his team while "the QASO sees the bigger picture," said Gunnery Sgt. Steven A. Blassingame, staff non-commissioned officer in charge of the fixed-wing side of the division.

This attention to detail is important not only in making sure ordnance will function properly when needed, but also to ensure dangers inherent to handling the ordnance are minimized. Live and inert munitions each present unique risks.

The 25-pound MK-76 practice bomb, commonly used by the Harriers for training, is not a high-explosive weapon, but it contains an explosive cartridge that is detonated by percussion, said Sgt. Michael R. Hartmeyer, fixed-wing ordnance QASO from Norwalk, Conn. Special care is taken with the transportation and physical

handling of this weapon.

Hartmeyer said live bombs and missiles are typically not percussion weapons, and the greatest danger is not the risk of detonation if a weapon is physically mishandled. Rather, items such as ammunition used by the Cobra helicopters are electrically primed, and static can cause the munitions to be "set off." To prevent this from occurring, several measures are taken. These include rocket tubes being coated with Hazards of Electromagnetic Radiation to Ordnance (HERO) reducing paint, adjusting the use of electrical equipment aboard ship during operations and team members being aware of their clothing.

Although the ordnance division Marines have conducted the majority of their operations aboard ship since deploying in March, they are prepared to do their work anywhere required.

For more information about the 26th MEU(SOC), visit the unit's Web site at www.usmc.mil/26thmeu.

13th MEU(SOC) Marine ... a cut *above* the rest

By Sgt. Charles Moore
Combat Correspondent

“That’s a \$10 haircut,” Staff Sgt. Anthony T. Adams joked as he pulled a bed sheet away from a Marine’s neck. “You’re ready to be in a video.”

The Marine took a second to check out his new cut before adding, “I should be paying for this.”

Adams, an infantryman by trade, has been honing his craft longer than most of his clients have been in the Marine Corps.

“I’ve been cutting (hair) ever since ... sixth grade,” he said. “We used to cut out of the bathroom, bedroom, garage, out on the street ... stuff like that.”

He may have started small, but Adams is now one of less than 10 Marines responsible for keeping the hair of more than 1300 Marines looking ship shape and squared away. Each element of the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit here contributed two or three Marines to cut hair. Adams, who has cut hair for Marines during the workup period, volunteered.

“It’s another thing to beat the time,” he said. “Every deployment, you’ll get kind of fatigued and isolate yourself. It’s good to learn different things and meet new people. It keeps you busy.”

Adams first began cutting hair in the Marine Corps as a private first class. As in the past, Marines cut each other’s hair while deployed. He said something didn’t sit right with him and he was going to fix it.

“I saw a couple of butchered individuals, so I thought I’d contribute,” he said. “I thought I could do better.”

Adams attended a two-week barber’s course at Naval Training Center San Diego and soon took up the task - a task he has performed for more than 15 years.



Photo by Sgt. Charles Moore

Staff Sgt. Anthony T. Adams focuses on fading a Marines’ hair while working in the barber shop aboard the USS Tarawa. Adams, an infantryman by trade, saw Marines hair getting butchered as a young Marine, and developed a passion for cutting hair the right way

According to Sgt. Alexander Price, ammunition chief, 13th MEU, the experience shows.

“He’s been great. He’s cut my hair twice, actually three times, once at (the training in an urban environment exercise),” the Americus, Ga., native said. “I get better haircuts from staff sergeant than I do on base.”

Adams said Marines who want a haircut from him should schedule an appointment. However, walk-ins are welcome for all the barbers.



Photo by Sgt. Charles Moore

Staff Sgt. Anthony T. Adams in deep concentration while sculpting another perfect fade. Adams considers cutting hair an effective way of passing the time during the deployment.

TAKE

OFF!



AV-8B Harrier

Coloring Page!

Kids AND adults: Color this page and write a message to a Marine or Sailor of the Fighting 13th MEU. Mail your page to:

Commanding Officer
ATTN: PAO
13th MEU
Unit 42525
FPO AP 96610-2525

We'll take sent masterpieces and post them aboard the ship! Remember: Have fun and we look forward to your artistic expression!